

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 18 January 2013
Subject	Decision number: 02/02007 - Proposal to expand St Botolph's Church of England Primary School (Aided)
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report seeks to inform members of the results of the Public Consultation
Recommendations:	The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and either endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education Learning and Skills on the decision to expand St Botolph's Church of England Primary School by issuing a public notice to expand the school

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Gravesham District section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012-17 indicates a need to commission additional primary school places in the West Gravesham and Northfleet areas.

1.2 On 12 September 2012, Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills that a consultation takes place on the proposal to expand St Botolph's Church of England Primary School.

1.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place between 8 October 2012 and 26 November 2012. A public meeting was held on 10 October 2012.

## **2. The Proposal**

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge St Botolph's Church of England Primary School (Aided) by 30 Reception Year places taking their PAN to 60 (2 FE) for the September 2013 intake. Successive Reception year intakes will offer 60 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 420 pupils.

## **3. Bold Steps and the Kent Commissioning Plan**

3.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition "to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places" as set out in 'Bold Steps for Kent'.

3.2 The Gravesham section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the West Gravesend planning area.

## **4. Outcomes of the Public Consultation**

4.1 Of the 14 responses received, 12 opposed the proposal. Comments and questions raised at the public meeting are explored in paragraph 5.2 below.

4.2 A summary of the comments received during the consultation period are given at appendix 1.

4.3 A copy of the questions, comments and responses made during the the public meeting are given in appendix 2.

## **5. Views**

### **5.1 Local Member**

The Local Members are Mr Harold Craske and Mr Leslie Christie.

Mr Christie:

"I am opposed to dealing with the problems in Northfleet by using a Church School with restrictive admissions policy. This did not serve the needs of the local community when the pupil next door to the school could be refused admission in favour of any faith believer 2 miles away. I believe the problem would be best overcome by getting Dover Road Community School out of category or expanding Rosherville earlier than currently planned."

Mr Craske has not yet indicated whether he supports the proposal.

### **5.2 The following issues were raised at the public meeting**

*Concern over the potential for a dilution in standards or the spiritual ethos of the school.*

The responsibility for maintenance of standards and the spirituality of the school is vested in the Head teacher, Mrs Sharon Smith and the Governing body. Mrs Smith made it clear during the public meeting that she was committed to ensuring that neither performance standards nor ethos were at risk and that the enlargement would be a source of enrichment for the school.

*Concern over the potential for an increase in traffic or local parking issues.*

There is currently a single access onto Dover Road, which is at that point, quiet narrow with residential parking, sometimes on both sides.

The access to the school may need to be considered as part of any redevelopment of the site and Property Group have factored this in to their feasibility studies. A possibility under consideration is the opening of a second entrance and the creation of a drop off area, inside the school grounds.

There are concerns about the roads around the school, with walking buses being a possible solution. A new traffic survey will be sought in parallel to the planning process, in order to clearly define the impact of traffic resultant from this proposal. Once full information is available, the School Travel Plan will be updated.

*Concerns about disruption to learning during build.*

Where possible, disruptive building work will be limited to times when the school is closed. A project manager will be appointed and Mrs Smith will maintain complete control over any work being done, particularly ensuring that health and safety issues are not compromised.

*Concerns over staff parking*

There is limited capacity on the site and an increase in car parking spaces is an issue. This will need to be looked at and if deemed necessary, incorporated into the planning for the new build.

### **5.3 Area Education Officer**

The AEO fully supports this proposal and, having considered other commissioning options, is of the belief that this enlargement is not only necessary, but the most cost-effective and sustainable solution to increased demand in the immediate area.

All other schools in the planning area were considered. No other schools in the planning area can be enlarged without a full rebuild. Such rebuilds would provide a poor return on public funds. It would also likely take much up to two years longer, by which time; the local authority would be at serious risk of failing in its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.

#### 5.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of St Botolph's Church of England Primary School are supportive of the proposal subject to certain conditions and caveats over building and funding. These conditions have been incorporated into the planning for the school.

#### 5.5 Headteacher

The head teacher of the school has been fully consulted and is supportive, subject to certain conditions and caveats.

#### 5.6 Diocese

The Diocese of Rochester has been consulted and are happy to support the enlargement of church schools.

#### 5.7 Pupils

The pupils of the school have been offered the opportunity to comment on the proposal.

### 6. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. No comments were received and no changes needed to be made to the Equality Impact Assessment following the consultation period.

### 7. Recommendations

7.1 The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and either endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education Learning and Skills on the decision to expand St Botolph's Church of England Primary School by issuing a public notice to expand the school

### 8. Background Documents

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

[http://www.kent.gov.uk/your\\_council/priorities\\_policies\\_and\\_plans/priorities\\_and\\_plans/bold\\_steps\\_for\\_kent.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/bold_steps_for_kent.aspx)

Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-2017

<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/plans-and-consultations/strategic->

[plans/Commissioning%20Plan%20for%20Education%20Provision%20Kent%202012-17%20FINAL%20\(Sept-2012\).pdf](plans/Commissioning%20Plan%20for%20Education%20Provision%20Kent%202012-17%20FINAL%20(Sept-2012).pdf)

Education Cabinet Committee report – 12 September 2012 – Primary Commissioning – Gravesham District

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/g4880/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Sep-2012%2010.00%20Education%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

#### Lead Officer Contact details

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## Proposal to expand St Botolph's Church of England Primary School (Aided), Gravesham

### Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed: 500  
 Consultation responses received: 14

A summary of the responses received showed that:

	In Favour	Undecided	Opposed
Governors			
Staff	1		1
Parents	1		9
Pupils			
Other			2
<b>Totals</b>	2		12

#### Comments in favour of the proposal:

- All children have a right to be educated and the population in Northfleet has greatly increased.

#### Comments against the proposal:

- We are concerned that such a dramatic expansion on pupil numbers could compromise the unique ethos and pastoral strengths of the school which were a key factor in our selection of St Botolph's.
- To expand would destroy the intimacy, quality of teaching, safe feeling and also spoil the reputation of the school.
- The family/community feel would be lost as children from other areas would come to the school.
- Parents have historically chosen this school precisely because of the single form
- The grounds are not big enough to cope with double the amount of pupils.
- Existing green space will be lost to accommodate the extra building size and additional staff parking.
- Children entering 11+ year will be exposed to disruption at this crucial point of their primary education.
- Unfair that the existing children are going to be subjected to disruption for the benefit of future children and new families moving into the area.
- Severe traffic problems already exist. Dover Road outside school is already a bottle neck for traffic in both directions which will only worsen with the increase of pupils/parents creating safety issues for the children.
- Building work raises concerns about Health and Safety issues.
- Loss of residents parking if drop off/pick up area created.
- The Gravesend West Planning Area Forecast shows the only potential shortfall of available places, if the proposal does not go ahead, is for 2015-16. This shows a forecasted shortfall of 1. It seems the disruption to existing children, the impact on traffic and massive change to the school community is not justified.
- The possibility of staggered play times to accommodate increased pupils is not conducive to learning as the noise of other children playing is disruptive.
- Why not get housing developers to build new schools as part of their developments.

## Proposal to expand St Botolph's CoE (VA) Primary School, Gravesend

### Summary of Public Consultation Meeting

#### Purpose of the Meeting

- To explain the proposal to expand St Botolph's Primary School.
- To give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions and comment.
- To listen to views and opinions.

Simon Webb delivered a short presentation outlining the proposal for expansion.

#### Statement from Headteacher

Population within Northfleet is growing and as the headteacher felt the children deserve a decent education has agreed, in principle, to the proposal to increase St Botolph's to a 2FE Primary School, subject to caveats already forwarded to KCC.

#### Statement from Chair of Governors

School is heavily oversubscribed with 130 applying for 30 places. The expansion proposal has the full support of the Governing Body. St Botolph's delivers an excellent standard of education, with a Christian ethos and the links formed with the local church will remain.

Question	Response
Have concerns about the safety of the children whilst construction works undertaken and the impact it may have on their education.	<p>The local authority understands parental concerns.</p> <p>Most of the heavy construction work will be carried out during the summer holidays but the local authority cannot guarantee this.</p> <p>Could be used as a positive learning experience for the children.</p>
Part of the ethos of the school is attendance at Church services by the children. Will this still continue, given the increase in pupil numbers to 420?	<p>Attendance of Church services at St Botolph's, will continue, with the help of additional staff and parent helpers.</p> <p>The statutory ratio of adults to children will be adhered to and wherever the children travel within the school environment a detailed risk assessment is undertaken.</p>
Parking and access to the school is very limited. If children from the Springhead development decide to come to St Botolph's the traffic will increase significantly, so can the local authority ensure parking and access at the school will be looked at.	<p>A full feasibility study will be undertaken and KCC Planners, Highways and Borough Council representatives will be heavily involved in these consultations.</p> <p>Parents are discouraged from parking outside the school but the message may need to be reinforced with the assistance from the local police and traffic wardens.</p>

<p>Dover Road junction at traffic lights is very hazardous, especially for children walking to school alone. Feel a pelican crossing is essential in terms of health &amp; safety of the children if the school wishes to develop further.</p>	<p>Both the headteacher and governors are adamant that the road network is looked at during these consultations.</p> <p>A lollipop person could be appointed to ensure the children cross the road safely.</p> <p>All highway requirements will have to be satisfied before this proposal can progress further.</p>
<p>As a parent I am excited and apprehensive about the proposals to expand the school and would like to encourage parental participation. Would also like reassurances that funding is in place to see building work through.</p>	<p>Have a six week consultation period to allow for parents, staff, local residents, children to comment on the proposals.</p> <p>The consultation would not have reached this stage if funding was not in place. Basic Need Funding comes from the government when there is indigenous growth. If the proposals are agreed it is expected that the formal cabinet decision will be made around March 2013, then the tendering process will begin.</p>
<p>Would like to remain positive about the expansion proposals and accept there may be some disruption to the children. However, would like more detail as to what facilities will be provided.</p>	<p>The Manor Primary school has gone through extensive improvement which you are welcome to visit.</p> <p>The planners and architects will determine the footprint for the school site but it is up to the headteacher and governors to be creative in how they use the space provided. Improvements are likely to be made to the school hall, kitchen, toilet, play space facilities.</p> <p>In the interim demountables of excellent quality can temporarily accommodate the extra children. They are steel framed, air conditioned, carpeted modular builds.</p>

20 people attended